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Reclaiming Our Manhood

The above-pictured persons have at least three things in common. They are Africans, males; and, beyond that, they are all men. Nelson Mandela has reportedly been offered release from imprisonment in exchange for a public statement of opposition to the use of violent means in African efforts to rid Azania(South Africa) of Caucasian minority rule. Placing his principles/his people's aspirations for freedom above an opportunity for personal, physical release from prison, Nelson refuses to make such a statement and, thus, remains locked up.

Malcolm, once a pimp, a peddler of drugs, a blood-sucker among his people, transformed himself into an insightful and

Professor George Simmonds Scheduled To Address H.A.C.O. Kwanzaa Observance -Dec. 27

On the second day of Kwanzaa, December 27, the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization will conduct an observance of Kwanzaa to which our Brothers and Sisters from outside the prison will be invited. Our program, which will run from 5-8 p.m., will consist of ceremony in which we will dedicate ourselves to the principles of Kwanzaa--self-determination in particular in that the second day of Kwanzaa celebrates the value of self-determination; performances of cultural self-expression; and music, refreshments, and socializing. The main feature of the program will be the education component during which we will hear a talk linking the matter of retention of traditional African values to the idea of self-determination. We have contacted Professor George Simmonds of Malcolm-King Community College in New York and co-author, with Dr. Yosef Ben-Jochannan, of THE BLACK MAN'S NORTH AND EAST AFRICA and are trying to raise money to get the Brother here. Those of you who attended our banquet this past April are well aware that Professor Simmonds spares no energy in setting fire in the spirits of his listeners. For more information, write to us at P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE.; 68502-0500.

Also In This Issue

FROM OTHER SOURCES: Conference On Crime, African Filmmaker,...; PRINCIPLES & SYMBOLS OF KWANZAA; PUBLICATIONS; etc.

Reclaiming Our Manhood

dedicated ideological/philosophical leader of African people in the U.S. He was assassinated.

Alfred Griffin was a U.S. Marine corporal. As an African and a Muslim, this man refused assignments to both Lebanon and Grenada on the grounds that his moral and religious principles forbade him from killing other Africans and/or Muslims. On May 15, 1984, a military judge at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina sentenced Griffin to four months at hard labor, reduction in rank to private, forfeiture of $395 monthly pay for six months, and a bad-conduct discharge.

Maurice Bishop, from 1979 until his assassination in 1983, led the impoverished nation of Grenada from approximately 50% unemployment to about 14%; from a condition of land, education, health care, and decision-making as options for a privileged few to a situation wherein these matters became the province of the majority of Grenada's population of approximately 110,000, the vast number of whom are Africans. Maurice was assassinated. While the question of whether U.S. operatives played a role in the Grenadian leader's death remains an open one, there is no debating the fact that the Reagan Administration viewed an <u>independent</u> Grenada with something akin to hatred and wanted to see the New Jewel Movement(the name of the ruling political party under Bishop) toppled.

Nelson Mandela, Malcolm, Alfred Griffin, and Maurice Bishop--all African males. But the one thing that separates them all from mere <u>maleness</u> to <u>manhood</u> is that they are/were persons of high moral character, meaning that each of them shows/showed a commitment to the needs and interests of African people and put those needs and interests above personal advantage and/or convenience. It is this same strength of character that makes Winnie Mandela or made Harriet Tubman a <u>woman</u>, as opposed to being merely a <u>female</u>. So manhood, as spoken of here, is not a sexist distinction but a moral or philosophical one.

The specific African men cited here are so cited because of the profound need African males in the U.S. have of models. Of the African males in this country who have the most notoriety, very few of them have much, if anything, in the way of African consciousness; very few can see beyond their own self-perceived "interests"; and most have thoroughly swallowed the liquor of the dominant society's values. This is the case whether we're talking about the business arena, the political spectrum, the entertainment field, or other areas. In the "From Other Sources" section of this edition of the FLAME, there is a piece on Spike Lee, the American-born African filmmaker whose movie, "She's Gotta Have It," has thrust him suddenly into the public view. His comments about being true to one's African self, about not selling out one's people and/or principles for a buck place him in extremely small company insofar as African folks in the entertainment industry are concerned. Assuming that Lee is serious about what he says(and at this point, there is no apparent evidence that he is not), it must be said that he is an African <u>man</u>. His stance is certainly a principled one and, for him to take such a stance, requires courage. Not only does it take courage to be different from the crowd, it takes courage to maintain a stance that has great potential for standing in the way of considerable financial wealth.

Here in Nebraska, we African males have a positive model of manhood in Senator Ernie Chambers. How many African males in this country can we find who have the courage to publicly state, as Ernie has done, support for Quadafi; to oppose the hanging of portraits of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln in the statehouse because these "great Americans" were racists; to consistently go against the tide of public opinion by seeking the abolishment of the death penalty; or to be the only member in a legislative body to never wear a suit, opting instead for t-shirts?

In whatever segment of this society's activities we search, the presence of <u>men</u>,

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From Other Sources

Conference Addresses Crime in African Communities in U.S.

"...The notion that candor about black-on black crime would fuel racists' arguments on its causes still dominates most civil rights leaders' thinking. Thus the issue usually gets short shrift when conferences are convened.

"That unwillingness to focus more strongly on the problem is what prompted Elsie Scott to plan an entire conference on the issue of black-on-black crime. Scott is the executive director of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives(NOBLE)...

"The first conference on 'Crime and the black community: causes, effects and remedial approaches' resulted from Scott's concerns. It was unique not only for being the first of its kind sponsored by a group of black law enforcement officials, but, with the co-sponsorship of the National Black Police Association(NBPA), it also marked the first time the two sometimes rival organizations combined on a common project.

"The three-day conference held on November 6-8 was noteworthy for the scope of its concerns and the caliber of participants. Programs that have proved successful in combatting crime were highlighted and experts from widely divergent fields compared notes on issues...

"...Community organizers joined health professionals, academics, politicians and a wide array of other experts in this first attempt to devise a national anti-crime strategy.

"...Crime statistics show an increasing number of black males are becoming victimized by crime, whether as offender or offended. Although blacks are less than 12 percent of the population, they comprise nearly 50 percent of all prison inmates as well as 42 percent of all homicide victims...

"Sister Falaka Fattah, director of Philadelphia's 'House of Umoja', said inner-city kids feel isolated because the black community has run away from its own responsibility toward them. Fattah's community organization has been credited with single-handedly erasing Philadelphia's enormous problem with street gangs. Her approach utilized the talents of middle-class black volunteers to implement programs throughout her city's troubled black neighborhoods...

"Despite renewed attempts to devise more effective deterrents to crime, the civil rights community is still slow to join. Scott said NOBLE and NBPA invited 60 black organizations to participate in the conference and only five responded."

-Above passages excerpted from "Blacks Face An Enemy Within" by Salim Muwakkil, which appears on page 6 of the November 26-December 9 edition of IN THESE TIMES.

African Entertainers Criticized By Lee

"Spike Lee, director of the surprise hit 'She's Gotta Have It', is outspoken and uncompromising about blacks in films.

"He's been widely quoted as criticizing Rae Dawn Chong for co-starring in the upcoming 'Soul Man', a comedy about a white who poses as a black...

"'I'm not saying lies. I talk about Whoopi (Goldberg) and her blue contact lenses. A lot of these black entertainers want to be white', Lee says. 'The more successful you want to be, you have to calm down your Negritude. Nose jobs. Then lip jobs. And now blue and green contact lenses.

"'Why alter your face?' he asks. 'Why deny who you are? My thing is: I will not compromise my blackness to sell tickets.'"

-Above passages excerpted from "Spike Speaks Out On Blacks In Hollywood," which appears on page 5D of the October 1 edition of U.S.A. TODAY.

African Candidate Formerly An FBI Agent

In the recent statewide elections in Michigan, William Lucas, an African,

ran unsuccessfully for the governorship against the Caucasian candidate, incumbent Governor Blanchard. According to an article("Reaganism Continues To Define The Political Debate") by Kevin J. Kelley in the November 19 edition of THE GUARDIAN, Lucas is a former F.B.I. agent who once spied on Martin Luther King.

Rebel Forces In Eritrea Build Vital Institutional Structures

"Orota, the central base of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front(EPLF), is barren and was once thinly populated. Today this area, in the northwestern corner of Ethiopia's most remote province, teems with rebel forces fighting for independence against Ethiopia's Soviet-backed government. It is also a home for refugees from other areas of Eritrea.

"...The central hospital is spread along both sides of Orota's valley. Entrances are well hidden, but inside is a modern facility that can meet almost every need in medicine and surgery.

"...In the countryside is an effective health care system of 6 regional hospitals, 25 clinics, 24 doctors, 150 nurses and 16 pharmacies. There are also more than 1,500 'barefoot doctors' who provide first aid in war zones.

"The Eritreans' goal is self-sufficiency. Materiel captured from the government army is melted and manufactured into equipment and spare parts. They can produce entire machines with tools that are far from advanced...

"Orota also has a radio station and newspaper that cover local and international news. A well-developed graphics business produces everything from medicine labels to educational material for the comprehensive literacy campaign..."

-Above passages excerpted from "The Eritrean Resistance," which appears on page 45 of the December edition of WORLD PRESS REVIEW.

Israel: South African Government Ally

"Among the military agreements of 1976 were direct Israeli arms sales to South Africa. Over the next several years South Africa would buy eight Reshef long-range missile boats mounted with Gabriel sea-to-sea missiles(recent models of the Gabriel are equivalent to the French Exocet missile)... The Times also noted reports from the Israeli radio and foreign press that 'about 50 South African naval personnel on temporary civilian status are training in the Tel Aviv area to man the missile boats.' The Israelis, according to one report, had set up a special school for the children of Afrikaans-speaking trainees.

"South Africa has purchased Israeli anti-tank missiles, air-to-air missiles, and 105mm self-propelled howitzers, as well as radar stations. It has also collected an assortment of anti-insurgency equipment that includes the Scout Remotely Piloted Vehicle, a 'large model aircraft crammed with electronics and cameras', which it used in a 1983 attack on Mozambique...

"Besides satisfying South Africa's major military needs, three electronics companies at least partly owned by the Israeli government -- Elbit, IAI, and Tediran -- have helped South Africa construct its own military electronics manufacturing sector to the point that South Africa now exports military communications and surveillance systems.

"South Africa is thus able to produce the electronic equipment that its troops use on a daily basis in the Black townships, the border areas, and Namibia. And these troops have had Israeli help in learning how to use their equipment effectively.

"...Israel shares with South Africa the intelligence information it gathers in the course of its extensive, if unacknowledged, econonic and military activities in other African nations..."

-Above passages excerpted from UNDERCUTTING SANCTIONS: ISRAEL, THE U.S. AND SOUTH AFRICA, A Report By Jane Hunter. The report was published in February, 1986 by Washington Middle East Associates.

FLAME *Editorial Policy*

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, is a Pan-Africanist newsletter. This means that the FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people and events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any artificial distinctions among African people based solely on place of birth. Therefore, references to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this policy is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts therefrom, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter the terms used therein to fit our editorial policy.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as being those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor.

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 900 words. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. Send your submissions to:

HARAMBEE FLAME
Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization
Attn: Mondo
P.O. Box 2500
Lincoln, NE
68502-0500

Announcements

Several members of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization are interested in learning KiSwahili. If you are fluent in the language and would like to teach KiSwahili to these members, please contact us. Or, if you have a source for good KiSwahili language-instruction tapes and/or texts, please share that information with us.

The Bill Brice Art Gallery, located in the Great Plains Black Museum at 2213 Lake St. in Omaha, is featuring the work of Omaha artist Oscar Pulliam during this month(December). The exhibit of Pulliam's work begins December 5th. Some of the paintings will be for sale.

Radio station KZUM(99.3 fm) in Lincoln airs a program that features music from Africa. The program, "African Connection, is broadcast on Wednesdays from 7-8 p.m.

Publications recently received:

SECHABA
A.N.C.
801 Second Ave.
Room 405
N.Y. 10017

SECHABA is an official organ of the African National Congress and features news of events and developments throughout the southern African region, with particular attention paid to the liberation struggles.

AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES
300 Eshelman Hall
U.C. Berkeley
Berkeley, CA 94720

AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES presents articles on historical and cultural matters, analyses of current developments, as well as poetry, etc.

Kwanzaa: Principles And Symbols

Kwanzaa was developed by Maulana R. Karenga in 1966 as an alternative, for African people in the United States, to the commercialized celebration of Christmas. He believed American-born Africans were in need of a holiday season that would serve to remind us of our common African heritage and introduce or re-familiarize us to/with important African values. Karenga recognized that we African folks in America were and are being ill-served by the individualism and materialism characteristic of this culture and that progress on our parts depended/depends on our taking hold of a communal frame of reference and developing a value system in which moral and spiritual standards assume high positions in our lives.

Kwanzaa was fashioned from the African tradition of celebrating the bringing in of harvest and from the traditional communal values which made/make successful harvests possible. The principles of Kwanzaa are as follows:

Umoja(Unity)
Kujichagulia(Self-determination)
Ujima(Collective work & responsibility)
Ujamaa(Cooperative economics)
Nia(Purpose)
Kuumba(Creativity)
Imani(Faith)

These principles correspond to the seven days(December 26-January 1) during which Kwanzaa is observed.

The symbols of Kwanzaa:

The straw mat symbolizes vital traditions which should constitute the foundation upon which our individual and collective lives ought to be based.

The seven-space candle-holder symbolizes the original tree or stalk from which African people branched to spread ourselves and influences over the earth.

The seven candles stand for the seven principles(in Swahili, "nguza saba").

The ears of corn symbolize our children.

The crops(fruits and vegetables) symbolize the results of our work, our collective efforts.

The gifts represent our appreciation of the work and cooperation which have made the production of the crop possible.

The cup is a symbol of both the unity which we have exhibited and the unity which future progress will require.

The red, black, and green flag or banner stands for our common African heritage (land and history), the struggles we have had to engage in and will have to engage in in the future, and our descendants and the legacy we will leave them.

.....

The following are excellent resources for additional information about and insight with regard to Kwanzaa. The second, THE KWANZAA KIT, is especially useful in explaining Kwanzaa to children and getting them involved in its observance.

KWANZAA: Everything You Always Wanted To Know But Didn't Know Where To Ask
by Cedric McClester
Gumbs & Thomas, Publishers
2067 Broadway, Suite 41
N.Y., N.Y. 10023

THE KWANZAA KIT
Anacostia Neighborhood Museum
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C.

KWANZAA: Origin, Concepts, Practice
by Dr. Maulana Karenga
Kawaida Publications
University of Sankore Press
2560 West 54th. St.
Los Angeles, CA 90043

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Reclaiming Our Manhood

African or otherwise, is rare. The presence of that strength of character which distinguishes a man from a boy, or distinguishes a woman from a girl, is lacking throughout American society. In its place, what we typically see is what we might call a "philosophy of expedience," an attitude or way of living whereby decisions are based upon one's self-perceived personal advantage. Such an attitude is a product of America's capitalist/individualist mode of operating and thinking and, for African people in particular, is compounded by institutional racism and economic deprivation. But the fact that we are not alone in our lack of men in no way lessens the gravity of the problem or the urgency of our need to solve it.

It cannot be said that African males in this country aren't trying to be men. It isn't that we're not trying. It is that American-spawned images of manhood are hanging us up. Essentially those images are of three types, and/or combinations thereof: the macho image in which males run roughshod over others, as exemplified by the U.S. bombing of Libya, the practically single-handed mowing down of enemies as is the main substance of the Chuck Norris and Sylvester Stallone films, etc; the stud image in which the degree of one's manhood is measured in sexual conquests over women, as is the prevalent theme in a very large number of "men's" magazines, films, press coverage of male movie and athletic stars, etc.; and the mover-and-shaker image in which one's manhood is determined by the degree to which a male accumulates wealth and converts it to power, as put forth by "Life-styles Of The Rich And Famous" or "Dallas," for example.

With the prevalence of such images of an alleged "manhood," it should not be difficult for us to understand why it is so common that African males in this country are killing each other over issues that are often trivial; can be found to brag about having babies everywhere but being no kinds of fathers whatsoever to them, other than biological; are so willing to sell drugs to us, serve as police-informants, pimp our women, betray our interests in the halls or backrooms of politics, all to make a buck.

But while it should be <u>easy</u> for us to understand why a thing is so, if the thing is killing us, it ought to be <u>tough</u> for us to tolerate it, to go on tolerating it. But, unfortunately, this is what we're doing--tolerating this paucity of manhood among us. And even in the cases of those of us who are stepping forward to say that we should cease to tolerate this, so many are, figuratively speaking, of a mind-set whereby we would attempt to drink water without drinking one of its components: "I'm going to drink this water but am only going to drink the hydrogen part." Running into such a person, we would certainly suppose him or her to be insane. Nevertheless, many people who are trying to address symptoms of this lack of manhood among us have a mind-set that is rooted in an absurdity just as substantial as that of our hypothetical, bizarre one-part-of-water-drinker.

What such people commonly fail to understand is that status-quo America and its values cannot be separated. We cannot accept the individualist, materialist, and competitive nature of American society and not receive the products of those characteristics. If we want more African <u>men</u> in this country, as well as African <u>women</u>, we are going to have to arrive at a recognition that it is America-as-a-concept, as well as the physical America, that is stifling the moral "hormonal" growth of our males and females. And for us to cultivate such growth, we must first develop institutions of <u>our own</u> by which we can promote the kinds of images of manhood capable of producing the kinds of courageous persons as are pictured on the front cover. Without persons of such strength--men and women--we, very simply, may not make it.

-Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa
(aka David Rice)
Editor